REMARKS

Prosecution has been reopened in view of Applicants Appeal brief submitted on August 9, 2006. Claims 14 and 16-28 remain pending in this application.

Claim 14 was rejected as being anticipated by Vukovich et al. (U.S. 4,493,228). Vukovich et al. discloses a throttle control system for an automatic shift transmission and does not disclose the steps recited in claim 14 for the following reasons.

Claim 14 requires the step of disengaging transmission of torque by opening the centrifugal clutch assembly responsive to a detected fault condition at a speed greater than a speed required to engage the centrifugal clutch. Vukovich et al. does not disclose this feature. The office action states that Vukovich et al. refers to disengaging a centrifugal clutch when the speed of the shaft 18 is reduced below a predetermined low level (Vukovich et al. Col, lines 42-46). All that this discloses is the known operation of a centrifugal clutch. It is well known that reducing engine speed will disengage the centrifugal clutch assembly. The claim requires opening the centrifugal clutch in response to detecting a fault condition at a speed greater than a speed required to engage the centrifugal clutch. This is not the same as reducing engine speed and does not disclose or suggest the claimed steps. Further, Vukovich et al. does not disclose any feature or device that would open a centrifugal clutch at an engine speed above an engagement speed. Accordingly, Vukovich et al. cannot anticipate claim 14. Applicant requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 22, 24, and 27-28 were rejected as being anticipated by Drussel et al. (U.S. 6,705,446). Claim 22 depends from claim 14 and is therefore allowable for the reasons discussed with regard to claim 14.

Claim 24 requires the steps of monitoring vehicle output with respect to vehicle input and overriding engagement of the pressure plate and friction plate at a speed greater than or equal to the desired speed by moving the pressure plate axially away from the engaged position responsive to the vehicle output being outside a desired range with respect to the vehicle input.

Drussel et al. does not disclose the steps of claim 24. All that Drussel et al. discloses is a device that includes a manually operated feature for locking a centrifugal clutch in a released

condition, or for moving the centrifugal clutch into an engaged position independent of engine speed (Figure 14). Drussel et al. does not disclose any monitoring features or steps. In fact, the manual control of the clutch is disclosed to lock the clutch in a released condition to allow electric starting of a motorcycle (Col 7, Lines 25-32), not for disengaging a clutch above an engine speed causing engagement responsive to a vehicle output being outside a desired range. Accordingly, claim 24 cannot be anticipated by Drussel et al. Applicant requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 16, 18, 19, 25 and 26 were rejected as being obvious over Vukovich et al. in view of Drussel et al. The claims all depend from an allowable base claim and therefore are in condition for allowance. Further, the proposed combination is not proper as the required suggestion and motivation is not present because the references teach away from each other, and such a combination would provide no benefit to the base reference. Without some benefit there can be no suggestion or motivation.

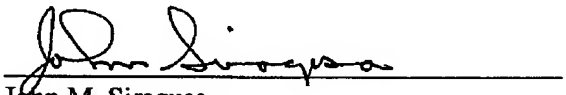
Vokovich et al. is directed toward a device for controlling a throttle for an automatic shifting system. In contrast, Drussel et al. discloses a device for manually overriding automatic operation of a clutch. As appreciated, manual overriding of the Vukovich et al. system is completely counter to the entire idea of having an automated shifting system. The Vukovich et al. system seeks to reduce the need for manual control while the Drussel et al. system seeks to retain manual control. For this reason the references teach away from each other and therefore there is no suggestion or motivation as is required to support the proposed combination.

Further, there is no benefit to the proposed combination. The automated system of Vukovich et al. would not benefit from the manual control provided by the Drussel et al. system. The Vukovich et al device utilizes throttle control to effect gear changing. Further, it is a basic foundation of the Vukovich et al device to provide for the shifting of the transmission without disengaging the clutch from the engine (col 1, lines 42-64). Accordingly, there is no benefit to a combination of the automated system of Vukovich et al. with the manual override disclosed in Drussel et al. and therefore there can be no suggestion or motivation to support the proposed combination. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Applicant believes that no additional fees are necessary, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482 in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS, P.C.



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